

SPOT THE NOSE

If you're scared of flying, suffer from vertigo or get seasick, then stay well away from the new Scotch blank tape competition! However, if you feel you could cope with these phobias then read on. You could win a trip to New York on Concorde, and stay four

year, along with other big sporting events, the alarm bells are ringing for VCR owners up and down the country. And quick to hear those bells are companies like Scotch, JVC, Maxell and now, Panasonic.

Probably the least complicated of this year's freebies, all you have to do with this Panasonic offer is to buy a twin-

Season or, as they say on K-Tel adverts, 'many, many more' as the answer to the third part.

The first twelve correct entries drawn from the bin — whoops! — I mean the nickle plated Video World tombola, were from Toby Lane of Northampton, Ian Coote from Herts, Billy Lander from Staffs, Helen Drury from Liverpool, Darren Sanderson from Leeds, Mrs J Roberts from Newport, Sandra Ross (any relation?) from Croydon, Mr A C Hanley from Witney, Peter Ellison from Hunmanby, L Allan from Perth, Paula Hill from Cumbria and Chris Moore from Mid-Glamorgan. Madonna will be on your hall carpet soon!!!



nights in the luxurious Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Plus you could be shown around the city in an executive helicopter and have dinner 107 floors up in the famous Windows of the World restaurant. So rush out and buy a Scotch EXG, EXG Hi-Fi or EXG Pro blank tape and don't forget to pick up a leaflet.

Inside, you'll find a photograph of Concorde at Heathrow and an aerial map. To win you just have to mark the spot on the map which corresponds to where you think Concorde's nose cone is! Get a receipt for the tape, send it in with your entry and on October the 16th you could be climbing aboard the pointy wonder for a whirlwind four days in The Big Apple (man). Ten runners up will get three hundred quid to splash about in the shop where they bought the tape, and a further 500 will each receive a free three hour Scotch EXG High Grade blank tape. You've got until the end of July to get your entries in, so, what are you waiting for?

SUPERTRONIC

The latest video company to join in the great tape race are Panasonic, and, like most blank tape manufacturers Panasonic have got an offer for you. . .

If you buy any blank video cassette at this time of year, it's unlikely that you'll unwrap it without finding some coupon or other tucked inside. Mainly because of the World Cup this

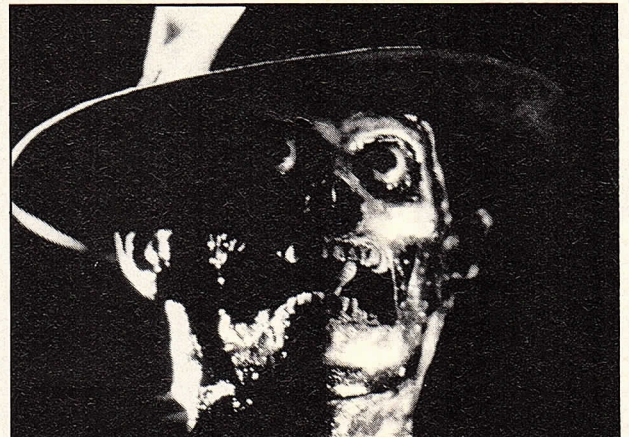
year, along with other big sporting events, the alarm bells are ringing for VCR owners up and down the country. And quick to hear those bells are companies like Scotch, JVC, Maxell and now, Panasonic. Probably the least complicated of this year's freebies, all you have to do with this Panasonic offer is to buy a twin-

LOST & FOUND

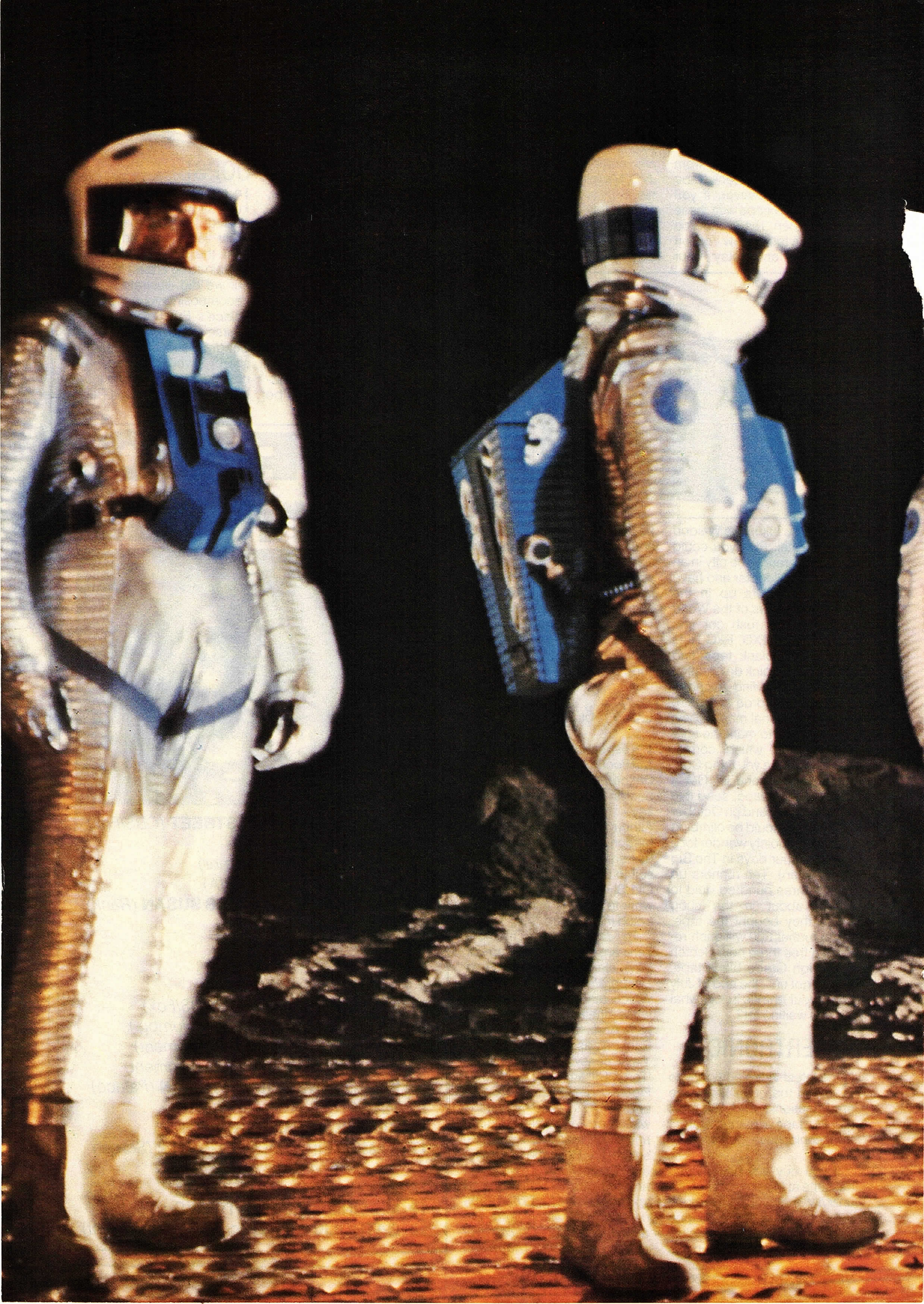
Desperately seeking who? For those of you who were *Desperately Seeking Susan* back in April, twelve can safely say they've found her. Although she doesn't look it, Madonna actually surprised us here at VW by proving herself to be bigger than *Rambo*! Old Sly's got some heavy PR work to do if he thinks he can catch *this* lady up.

To refresh your memory here are the questions again. Who stars with Madonna in *Desperately Seeking Susan*? Which other recent video release briefly features Madonna? And name three other Rank releases. The Answers? 'Easy peasy' said the art ed, 'Terry Gilliam, *The Last Star Fighter*, *Turk 182*, *Red Sonja* and *Witness*' — so he doesn't win a copy. He wasn't eligible anyway; I read the rules! No, seriously, Rosanna Arquette and *Crazy For You* were the answers to the first two, and you could have had *The Terminator*, *The Falcon and the Snowman*, *The Chain*, *Not Quite Jerusalem*, *The Mean*

TOP 20 Rentals



- 1 NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (CBS/Fox)
- 2 WITNESS (CIC)
- 3 A VIEW TO A KILL (Warner)
- 4 INVASION USA (MGM/UA)
- 5 DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN (Rank)
- 6 PALE RIDER (Warner)
- 7 GREMLINS (Warner)
- 8 LIFEFORCE (Guild)
- 9 PERFECT (RCA/Columbia)
- 10 RETURN OF THE JEDI (CBS/Fox)
- 11 GHOSTBUSTERS (RCA/Columbia)
- 12 CAT'S EYE (Screen Entertainment)
- 13 RED SONJA (Screen Entertainment)
- 14 KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN (Palace)
- 15 MASK (CIC)
- 16 BEVERLY HILLS COP (CIC)
- 17 RAMBO FIRST BLOOD PART 2 (Screen Entertainment)
- 18 STICK (CIC)
- 19 MISSING IN ACTION TWO (Guild)
- 20 CATHOLIC BOYS (Screen Entertainment)



SQUIDGY THINGS

FROM

OUTER SPACE



Bryce and the bug-eyed monsters; Allan Bryce takes a look at the odd assortment of aliens who've worked their way onto celluloid over the years, including the glowing good guys in CBS Fox's new release 'Cocoon'.

At the end of the classic 1951 Howard Hawks version of *The Thing From Another World*, reporter Douglas Spencer had good reason to warn audiences to 'Keep watching the skies!' He and a group of scientists had been stuck in the Arctic wastes battling it out with an eight-foot tall vegetable from outer space whose flying saucer had inconveniently crashed into an ice floe. Looking a lot like tv's Matt Dillon (James Arness) with platform heels, the alien creature had been freed from its' icy tomb by the scientists, and then promptly displayed its gratitude by eating as many of them as it could! The formidable monster could regenerate missing limbs like a plant, and they didn't have any weed killer at the base! Fortunately one of their number came up with a sensible suggestion: 'What do you do with a vegetable? You cook it.' Sure enough, a few thousand volts of electricity stopped it dead in its tracks. But were there any more up there like him? You bet your life there were! The reporter's warning proved prophetic, because the huge success of *The Thing* paved the way for a host of celluloid alien invasions.

Many earlier fantasy flicks had depicted bug-eyed monsters roaming through space in cardboard rockets, and the movie serials of the 40's had brought a few of them down here for a visit: *The Flying Disc Man From Mars*, for example had Mota the Martian (Gregory Gay) hiding in a volcano and attempting to conquer the Earth with his dreaded Thermal Disintegrator (two hundred toilet rolls covered in tin foil). But the 50's at last saw Earth get a five star rating in the extra-terrestrial visitors' guide, and more and more discriminating monsters began to stop off there for a spot of sight-seeing.

First down after *The Thing* was a strange looking character whose head was a halloween fright mask encased in a plastic bubble. He went under the inscrutable name of *The Man From Planet X* (1951) and his mission was to hypnotise the inhabitants of a small Scottish island into forming an invasion force to pave the way for others of his kind. It was a snappy little movie, shot in six days by the prolific Edgar Ulmer — who used plenty of mist in his Scottish studio to disguise budgetary shortcomings!

But of course, not all alien visitors were unfriendly. Those in *It Came From Outer Space* (1953 — CIC Video) were huge Xenomorphs, which is a fancy way of saying they only had one eye, so they obviously couldn't appreciate the movie's excellent 3D effects! Based on Ray Bradbury's short story *The Meteor*, the plot had astronomer Richard Carlson trying to convince his sceptical neighbours that he has seen a spacecraft land in the desert. In the end he becomes quite a good pal of the creatures therein and helps them repair their ship and leave.

In a similar vein was the classic 1953 picture *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, in which the alien visitor put his gleaming

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saucer down in Washington DC and set about giving the world a lecture on the dangers of using nuclear weapons. (Where is he now that we need him again?) To prove that he has the power to destroy the world if the people of Earth don't listen, the benevolent Klaatu (Michael Rennie in a dapper spaceman's costume) causes the Earth to come to a standstill for 24 hours. After all, how can you argue with a trade-unionist from another galaxy?

As far as science-fiction literature is concerned, the most famous of all alien invasions took place in 1898 when Martian death machines landed on Cobham Common in H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*. In 1938 the youthful Orson Welles played a Halloween night prank that made sure Americans in particular would



never forget H. G.'s classic novel: his Mercury Theatre dramatised the tale on the radio as if it were actually happening, and many thousands of panicking citizens took flight at the thought of the monsters that were supposed to be heading their way.

In 1953 they got a chance to see what they had previously only visualised in their mind's eye when George Pal launched his spectacular technicolor movie of the same name. Transplanting Wells' invasion to California, Pal cast Gene (Burke's Law) Barry as the research scientist trying to stem the super-destructive extra-terrestrial invasion. But he and the rest of mankind seem helpless against the gigantic Martian war machines which disintegrate everything in their path. Even a priest who evokes the name of God and attempts to reason with the invaders gets sent off to meet his maker. After every conceivable weapon proved ineffectual, the creatures are felled at the very last minute by the common cold. They should have packed their winter woolies!

War of the Worlds justly won an Oscar for its special effects, but no-one suggested giving anything except a raspberry to *The Devil From Mars* (1953). This poverty row British production featured a statuesque female clad in sexy boots and black tights and the very latest in shiny black skullcaps; she lands her shaky-looking spacecraft in a remote part of Scotland, unpacks a walking toaster with a police light for a head, and sets off to try and persuade some of the more eligible male locals to come back with her to help re-populate her dying planet. Surprisingly they say no.

Left. Lots of humans looking worried in 'It came From Outer Space.' (CIC Video) Right. Peter Cushing after failing to win at 'Trivial Pursuit'. Overleaf. Daleks Invasion Earth 2150 AD.

Equally daffy was the cucumber monster from Venus that provided low-budget menace in Roger Corman's 1956 production *It Conquered The World*. Made out of p  pi  r mache, the alien monster set up headquarters in a cave and enslaved the mind of a youthful Lee Van Cleef (though it must have already been slightly added if he agreed to appear in a movie like this) by attaching bat-like creatures to his neck. In the end Van Cleef snaps out of it and turns the alien on its side — that'll do it every time! Corman also provided the drive-in cinema of the 50s with an even lower budget alien invasion: his *Not of this Earth* (1957) couldn't even afford a papier-m  ch   monster and instead featured actor Paul Birch in a business suit and dark glasses sending bad actors back to Venus via a matter transmitter. Dick Miller's cameo as a vacuum cleaner salesman was the only thing that made it worth catching.

A more serious note was struck by *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956 — The Video Collection), Don Siegel's remarkable sci-fi classic about how the residents of the tiny California community of Santa Mira are taken over by emotionless doubles from outer space who grow from huge pods and assume the physical characteristics of their victims while they lie sleeping. Filmed during the height of the McCarthy witchhunts, this chilling fable on the loss of humanity originally ended with hero Miles Bennell (Kevin McCarthy) trying to stop traffic on a crowded motorway and screaming 'You're next!' at the audience. But the studio tacked on a phony happy ending afterward, showing the authorities discovering the aliens' plan. Nowadays it is usually shown as its makers intended. A 1978 remake in which the pod people are now shown to be in charge of half of America (we'd always suspected as much) didn't have the dramatic impact of the original, Don Siegel, as an ominously silent cab driver, and the star of the first film, Kevin McCarthy, still stopping traffic with that piercing cry: 'You're Next!'

Also memorable was the much underrated *I Married A Monster From Outer Space* (1957), which despite its hokey title was a tense and well scripted movie about how Gloria Talbot finds out that her handsome new hubby (Tom Tryon) is actually an alien monster in disguise. As in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the aliens are creating doubles of Earth people for their own nefarious ends, but when Gloria blows the whistle on them they all dissolve into what looks like cold tapioca pudding.

Talking of cold tapioca. . . The 28 year-old Steve (then Steven) McQueen shared his first starring role with something very similar when he appeared in the memorable 1958 monster movie *The Blob* (Mountain Video). The title terror resembled a giant wad of bubble gum which just kept getting bigger and bigger as it scoffed the residents of a small American town. In one great scene it eats the projectionist at the local cinema and then oozes through the windows of the booth to swallow an audience engrossed in watching *The Daughter of Horror!* (Damn — couldn't it have waited till the intermission?). Steve and his pals reluctantly take time off from making out and racing their souped-up hot rods to freeze the monster with fire extinguishers. A sequel, *Beware! The Blob* turned up in 1972. This was directed by Larry (J.R.) Hagman, who also had a small part as a hobo who becomes blob food. He doesn't talk about it much nowadays, but don't worry Larry, your fans have long memories!

More silly monsters turned up in the 1960s, starting with the men in tights with big stuffed heads who provided some of the unintentional chuckles in *Invasion of the Star Creatures* (1961). These vegetable monsters were low budget creations indeed and not a patch on the wonderful walking plants that enlivened a superior 1963 adaptation of John Wyndham's



classic science-fiction novel *Day of the Triffids* (Quadrant Video). Ex-crooner Howard Keel played the American seaman who woke up in hospital after an eye operation to find that he was one of the few people left in a devastated London who could still see. Everyone else had been blinded by watching the spectacular meteor display that had brought the Triffids to Earth. Uprooting themselves to chase after their victims with a truly gross slurping sound, the Triffids were a memorable menace, but the movie was spoiled somewhat by the ridiculous ending screenwriter Philip Yordan dreamed up to cap Wyndham's original concept. The book ended with humanity still struggling against the monster plants, but in the film it turns out that throwing a bucket of salt water over a Triffid will turn him into Blob-like goo, and having realised that, mankind's problems are solved — they just chuck'em in the sea!

The arrival of alien visitors caused a similar amount of damage in *Daleks Invasion Earth 2150 AD* (1966 — Thorn) when those motorised dustbins made popular by the British television series *Dr Who*, turned up to plant a million megaton bomb at the Earth's core and 'Exterminate! Exterminate! Exterminate!' every miserable earthling in sight. I remember being disappointed that when they zapped people with their death rays the victims didn't glow negative the way they did on the tv show, but otherwise this kiddies effort was pretty faithful to the spirit of the series that spawned it. Peter Cushing played everybody's favourite time traveller.

But if we thought we had it tough, the Japanese went through hell rebuilding Tokyo almost every other week after it had fallen beneath the p  pi  r-mache

Under 14 the lot.

This box of tricks contains all you need to make a movie. The main attraction being, of course, the new GRC2 VideoMovie.

It's a VHS video camera and recorder in one. And the first one of its kind to include autofocus.

So, all you do is literally point and shoot. Your perfectly focused pictures are then recorded onto a VHS compact cassette.

To play them back, you simply switch to a full-size VHS recorder using the adaptor provided.

Or, you can use any TV that's handy. (If one isn't, you can even check your shots through the viewfinder.)

For close-ups, there's a macro facility. And for closing in, there's a 6X power zoom.

The GRC2 will shoot in light as low as 15 lux. (That's candlelight to the unenlightened.)

And because its viewfinder switches round, it can be used with whichever eye suits you best.

Besides being something of a star in itself, the VideoMovie also comes complete with a case full of extras.

There's a 30 minute cassette. A battery pack. A battery charger and mains adaptor. Plus a cable that lets you do dubbing.

For features of a more epic kind, we can also provide you with a range of optional accessories.

Like a title generator. A pause remote control. Together with a choice of mikes and filters.

On the scales, the whole caboodle weighs in at 13.2lbs. Try picking up a movie crew for less.

VHS **JVC**



claws of *Godzilla*, *Ghidrah*, *The Three Headed Monster* and an assortment of giant moths, dragons and even flying jellyfish. The latter was called *Dagora The Space Monster* by his pals and made his first appearance in 1965, ripping up bridges and scoffing extras in his quest for diamonds — which he eats! Imagine taking this guy out to dinner! Equally daft was *Yongary, Monster From The Deep* (1967), a Korean city stomper who drank petrol and liked Korean rock music. He was a lovely mover.

All this silliness came to an end in the early 70's when the advent of 2001 — *A Space Odyssey* (MGM/UA Video) encouraged science-fiction filmmakers to attempt a more realistic approach to the genre. A good example of this could be found in 1971's *The Andromeda Strain*, a superior technological thriller in which the outerspace organism that destroyed a tiny desert town turned out to be no bigger than the head of a pin. Scientists racing against time to analyse it in a top secret government research establishment suddenly find their technology turned against them when the mutating germ causes the establishment's nuclear self-destruct device to operate, and in the film's truly hair-raising climax, hero James Olsen has to run the gauntlet of deadly lasers and poison gas to switch it off.

Also in a more serious vein was the confusing but visually stunning *Man Who Fell To Earth* (1976 — Thorn), which featured David Bowie as the stranded alien who made millions by marketing electronic gadgets but was prevented from going home to his desert planet by the government. Eventually he becomes an

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alcoholic recluse. The movie used Bowie's ambiguous persona well and threw up some startling images of Earth as seen through alien eyes, but it was way overlong and far too pretentious for mass public acceptance.

Sympathetic aliens were definitely in vogue in the late 70's, particularly after the cute, music-loving extra-terrestrials of Steven Spielberg's megahit *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (RCA/Columbia) turned up with their own light show to preach a message of love and peace. Richard Dreyfuss starred as power engineer Roy Neary who first witnessed a UFO during a blackout and finally managed to hitch a lift on one. The film started out well, fell flat in the middle, and then revived itself for an eye-popping climax full of brilliant Douglas Trumbull special effects. It made a fortune at the box office and paved the way for the even more popular later Spielberg hit *E.T.* — *The Extra Terrestrial*.

E.T. (1982) became an instant classic. The tale of a cute little alien creature left behind on Earth by mistake and adopted by a family of middle class American kids had its treacly moments, but under Spielberg's sure directional hand it became a benign fantasy which could not fail to appeal to audiences of all ages. Unfortunately it's a movie we will not be seeing (legally) on video in the immediate future. Spielberg plans to reissue it Disney-style every few years at cinemas only.

While *E.T.* was cleaning up at the box office, people didn't seem to want to know about John Carpenter's brilliant remake of *The Thing* (1982 — CIC). Perhaps it was because this grisly tale of a shape-shifting outerspace invader, who menaces a group of scientists at a remote Antarctic base, was just too grim and unrelenting for popular public acceptance. Certainly Rob Bottin's grotesque special effects showing people's bodies splitting open and their heads popping off, growing spider legs and scuttling away, were the stuff of nightmares. But the film's commercial failure caused the distributors (Universal) to pull the plug on his next movie — a proposed screen version of Stephen King's *The Dead Zone* (this eventually went ahead with David Cronenberg directing).

Perhaps by way of atonement, Carpenter recently gave us one of the most charming of alien visitors in Jeff Bridges'

Starman (1985 — RCA Columbia). He crash lands on Earth in an explosive It Came From Outer Space fashion (one of Carpenter's favourites) and turns up as a ball of glowing energy at the remote home of widow Karen Allen, where he assumes the form of her dead husband. It is then up to the distraught Allen to help him reach the safety of his rescue craft before the authorities, as personified by stiff military type Richard Jaeckel, can capture him for study.

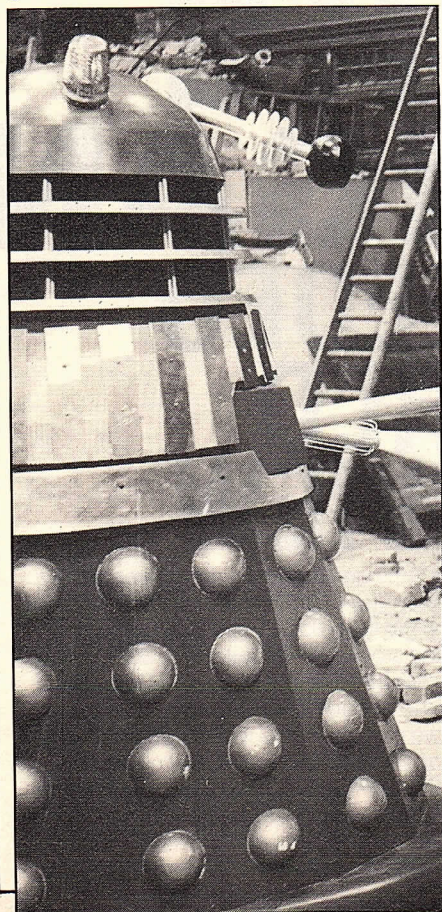
What makes the film so effective is that it generally eschews conventional science-fiction effects (though the opening bit where the alien transforms into Bridges is a stunner) and concentrates on the burgeoning relationship between Bridges and Allen in a 'Road movie' context. Allen (who you may remember as the female lead in *Animal House* and *Raiders*) is fine, but the film mainly belongs to Bridges, whose offbeat portrayal is a masterpiece of skilled acting technique.

There are also some fine performances in the latest aliens-on-Earth extravaganza to hit our screens. CBS/Fox Video's *Cocoon* has yet more friendly creatures from space turning up in human guise to rent a nice big house near the sea in Florida. Their secret mission is to retrieve cocoons containing the bodies of friends left behind at the bottom of the ocean thousands of years beforehand, and once these have been netted they are placed in a swimming pool especially energised by the aliens to bring them back to life. But this is the same pool that for some time has been the swimming hole of a trio of sprightly oldsters (Hume Cronin, Wilford Brimley and Don Ameche), and an illicit dip in it turns out to be the same as a visit to Ponce de Leon's fabled fountain of youth, whereupon the newly revitalised pensioners set out on a second childhood, which has amusing and then tragic consequences.

To give away more of the plot would be a crime. Suffice it to say that it all ends in both laughter and tears, and along the way offers some grand special effects and some great performances. Don Ameche in particular is in fine fettle as the ageing playboy who is not past a spot of break-dancing, and Brian Dennehy (the sheriff in *First Blood*) is similarly a stand-out as the benevolent alien leader. Don't let the fact that it's all about oldsters put you off, because the great charm of this movie is such that it makes you realise old age isn't all sitting around waiting to be spoon-fed!

It wouldn't be at all bad if the inhabitants of those UFOs we're always hearing about turned out to be like the aliens in *Cocoon*, but until mankind actually experiences its first close encounter, we'll have to make do with what the movies offer us. Stanley Kubrick, famed director of 2001, may have been right when he pointed out that the irrefutable proof there is intelligent life in space is that they have never bothered to visit us — but we optimists prefer to just keep watching the skies.

VW



Spike Milligna, the world's most famous misprint, talks to Allan Bryce about his adventures with veedeo and his new release, the 'Best of Q'.

This veedeo will shake the world to its ankles!" Spike Milligan told me at the press launch of his zany *Best of Q*, a new BBC release masterminded by the arch-goon himself and featuring such delights as curry-eating Daleks, a plague of Liberaces, the arrest of a 6 foot man in a five foot nine inch zone and an interview with the Queen's chicken. Spike had turned up wearing a striped suit — 'alright, so I need a good outdoor aerial!' — and told me by way of introduction that he was a little fed up with people coming up to him and asking 'When did you get out?' But I assured him I was more interested in his anarchic humour than his dress sense, and so he let me corner him for a brief chat about his ankle-shaking new video.

I should actually say veedeo, because that's what Spike calls it, in a voice faintly reminiscent of his most famous Goon show incarnation Eccles. 'This veedeo is what will be known as The Spike Milligan Memorial veedeo to celebrate my fortieth year in showbusiness as the best light entertainment record the BBC have ever had. When this series first showed on television it was almost as popular as the test card.' He made a beeline for the grub provided by the Beeb and begun to tuck in enthusiastically. 'You must excuse me,' he says, 'But I will probably get bugger all else payment for this veedeo so I might as well get my money's worth out of them here.'

The show was first broadcast in the late 60s — 'very late, about half past six in the evening' — and, like *The Goons* it became an important influence on other madcap British comedy teams like *Monty Python* and *The Goodies*. The Python team in particular have often acknowledged the debt, with Terry Jones only recently pointing out 'Spike did it first — and best.' A Python fan himself, Spike is flattered by this: 'If they imitated my style of humour they did so with a great amount of dexterity. More power to them, because they were wonderful.' The first series was simply entitled *Q4*, and Spike insists it was the funniest of them all. Unfortunately no extracts from it are available for our future video enjoyment though because the BBC, in their infinite wisdom, wiped the tapes. Spike's interpretation of this act is as follows: 'They came in one morning and said "What can we f*** up today?" They like to make decisions, and so after they had made a decision about the new carpet, the wallpaper, the new desk, and when they were going to have their holidays, they said "We're very short of veedeo. So



SPIKE MILLIGAN THE VEDEO WORLD INTERVIEW

let's wipe some!" I am particularly pleased I have recorded this veedeo of *The Best of Q* before they wipe the rest of them. At least now, in the year 2000, they will be able to see it and say "He was once alive — and sometimes twice, because with these new miracle drugs they can bring you back again!"

So why was the show called *Q* in the first place?

'Believe it or not you are the first person to ask me that,' he says, giving me a

manic grin that makes me immediately wish I hadn't. 'It's a silly reason really. But at the time of the first series they had on the stocks a liner called the *Q2* — which later became the Queen Elizabeth 2 — and nobody knew its name. So I thought we'd do the same with my show — have it on the stocks with no other name other than *Q4*!' Spike admits that writing the series was not easy: "Unlike *The Goon Show*, which of course was for radio, the sketches in it were mainly visual, and to